

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) A handle for a tool having a ~~work performing component with a~~ primary line of attack and a natural arc of motion with a work-performing blade defining a plane, the handle ~~[[,]]~~ comprising:
 - a distal end coupled directly or indirectly to the ~~work performing component~~ blade; and
 - a gripping portion extending away from the distal end in a plane generally transverse to the plane defined by the blade, the shape of the gripping portion being such that a user's wrist, forearm, or both, are in a substantially neutral position with respect to the primary line of attack and throughout at least a portion of the natural arc of motion.
2. (Currently Amended) The handle of claim 1, wherein the gripping portion is generally curvilinear, ~~describing~~ forming a partial semi-circle or semi-oval.
3. (Currently Amended) The handle of claim 1, wherein the gripping portion generally ~~describes~~ forms a partial semi-circle having a radius on the order of 3 to 4 inches.
4. (Original) The handle of claim 1, wherein the gripping portion is generally curvilinear, describing a closed circle or oval.
5. (Currently Amended) The handle of claim 1, wherein the cross-sectional circumference of the gripping portion is in range from 3.5 to 5 inches, ~~or thereabouts~~.
6. (Original) The handle of claim 1, wherein the gripping portion further includes a slight taper along its length.
7. (Currently Amended) The handle of claim 1, wherein at least a portion of the circumference of the gripping portion ~~describes~~ forms a flattened ellipsis.

8. (Currently Amended) The handle of claim 1, wherein the ~~work-performing component includes~~ blade forms part of a trowel, cultivator, weeder, or hoe.

9. (Currently Amended) The handle of claim 1, in combination with a rake, shovel, or other long-handled tool ~~such as a rake or shovel~~.

10. (Original) The handle of claim 1, in combination with a mid-length or telescoping version of a short-handled tool.

11. (Original) A quick-release version of the handle of claim 1, adapted for use with an existing tool having a straight shaft.

12. (Original) The ~~tool~~ handle of claim 1, wherein the gripping portion includes a polymeric covering.

13. (New) A handle for a tool having a blade defining a plane, the handle comprising:
a distal end coupled directly or indirectly to the blade; and
a gripping portion extending away from the distal end, the gripping portion forming an open arc in a plane generally transverse to the plane of the blade.

14. (New) The handle of claim 13, wherein the gripping portion forms a semi-circle having a radius on the order of 3 to 4 inches.

15. (New) The handle of claim 13, wherein the cross-sectional circumference of the gripping portion is in range from 3.5 to 5 inches.

16. (New) The handle of claim 13, wherein at least a portion of the circumference of the gripping portion forms a flattened ellipsis.

17. (New) The handle of claim 13, wherein the blade forms part of a trowel, cultivator, weeder, or hoe.
18. (New) The handle of claim 13, wherein the blade forms part of a rake or shovel.
19. (New) The tool of claim 13, wherein the gripping portion includes a polymeric covering.